

already begun. Frequently a budget for conservation work has not been included within the overall project budget, leaving the archeologist and project managers to seek out other funding sources and creative ways to secure money for conservation of the artifacts. As described above, volunteers, student interns, and laboratory technicians were used throughout the project to assist with conservation tasks, documentation and treatments. This arrangement was primarily made with the archeologists in an attempt to keep overall project costs down. The necessity to train volunteers and students, with different experience

levels, must be taken into consideration when preparing a budget at the beginning of a project. Both the archeologist and the conservator must address these challenges before the first shovel enters the ground, and communication throughout the entire process is essential for both the good of the project as well as the artifacts.

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Photos by the author.

Jeffrey Maish

Archeological Conservation Display

The American Institute for Conservation (AIC) and Objects Specialty Group presented a staffed display on archeological conservation at the annual meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) in Long Beach California, in January 2001. The display was funded jointly by the AIC and the Intersociety Relations Committee of the SHA. Entitled "Gone with the Wind (but it doesn't have to be)," it presented some of the main areas of involvement of object conservation within archeology. The display also attempted to address some of the conceptions/misconceptions held about conservation. The central panel included sections on some principal areas of conservation concern: the definition(s) of conservation; planning for conservation; on-site participation, including stabilization; lifting and transport; laboratory conservation and research; and storage. The "urban myths of conservation" panel presented conservation not as in competition, but as a complement to archeology. A segment of the excavation responsibilities could therefore be turned to a conservation team member who could perform tasks that contribute to research while at the same time freeing time for the archeologist to perform his or her research. A third "did you know?" panel presented some general knowledge facts about sites, such as micro-environments and their potential effects on materials, and subsequently, the interpretation of the site material.

The project evolved and was organized through the efforts of the Archaeological Conservation Discussion Group of the Objects Specialty Group. This group has a principal goal of establishing a continuing dialogue with the archeological community. The poster presented archeological conservation in a general and approachable manner with the aim of informing attendees of issues involved in conservation on site while also presenting the goals of the AIC. Conservators were on hand to discuss the poster and also to receive feedback from archeologists on conservation needs and challenges. The display itself was made with portability and flexibility in mind so that it can be modified to fit specific archeological audiences.

Conservators at the SHA display reported a high level of interest and received many helpful suggestions. It is hoped that the small display can travel to future regional and national archeological conferences and provide a further point of contact with the AIC and conservation community. Currently, brochures are also being developed to provide the same information to a much wider audience. For more information please contact the AIC office at AIC, 1717 K. St. NW Suite 200, Washington DC 20006, 202-452-9545, or visit the AIC web site at <infoaic@aicfaic.org>.

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